

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JERUSA 00790 01 OF 02 171702Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----029275 171705Z /43

O 171611Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 545
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JERUSALEM 790

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TEL AVIV CHARGE

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, XF, US
SUBJ: MEETING WITH BEGIN ON SOUTHERN LEBANON MARCH 17

REF: (A) STATE 68721, (B) STATE 67498

SUMMARY: YOUR ANSWERS TO BEGIN'S QUESTIONS OF YESTERDAY AND MY ENSURING CONVERSATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER APPEAR TO HAVE CLARIFIED IN HIS MIND THE DIMENSIONS OF HIS DILEMMA. I HIT HIM VERY HARD ON THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PEACE PROCESS OF A PROLONGED IDF STAY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. IT APPEARED TO HAVE AN IMPACT. HE IS STILL CONCERNED, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WITHDRAWAL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ALTERNATIVE (EFFECTIVE) SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, AND IN PARTICULAR ABOUT THE TIME GAP BETWEEN THE TWO. HE REMAINS CONVINCED THAT PALESTINIAN FORCES WILL RETURN TO THE AREA PROMPTLY UPON IDF WITHDRAWAL. BEGIN IS CONSULTING HIS COLLEAGUES LATER THIS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 JERUSA 00790 01 OF 02 171702Z

AFTERNOON ABOUT OUR RESPONSE AND SAID HE PROBABLY WOULD WANT TO SEE ME AGAIN TOMORROW EVENING AFTER THE SABBATH. END SUMMARY.

1. I MET WITH BEGIN AT HIS RESIDENCE MARCH 17 AT 1400 HOURS WITH THE ANSWERS PROVIDED REF A. BEGIN WAS ALONE; I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY KIRBY. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY BUSY PREPARING

FOR HIS DEPARTURE SUNDAY FOR THE US. HE APPEARED PREOCCUPIED AND WORRIED.

2. I HAVE THE STRONG SENSE THAT THE ANSWERS HE RECEIVED TODAY, AND OUR CONVERSATION CONCERNING THEM, MAY HAVE PROMPTED HIM TO DO SOME VERY SERIOUS THINKING ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF ISRAELI FORCES REMAINING IN LEBANON FOR A PROLONGED PERIOD. HE IS MEETING TODAY AT 1600 WITH HIS SENIOR ADVISORS TO DISCUSS OUR RESPONSE, WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER MEETING AFTER SUNDOWN TOMORROW. HE SAID HE THOUGHT HE WOULD HAVE REACTIONS TO OUR DEMARCHE AND SOME FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE SITUATION BEFORE HE LEAVES ON SUNDAY.

3. AFTER READING THE TEXT OF OUR ANSWERS WHICH I HAD GIVEN HIM, BEGIN SAID THE KEY ISSUE REMAINS UNCLEAR, I.E. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDF WITHDRAWAL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON TO PREVENT THE RETURN OF PALESTINIAN FORCES. HE REVERTED TO THIS POINT SEVERAL TIMES. HE ASKED SPECIFICALLY WHETHER, HAVING DECLARED ITS WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW, ISRAEL WOULD HAVE TO DO SO IMMEDIATELY UPON THE ADOPTION OF A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. IF SO, HE WONDERED, WHAT IS ISRAEL EXPECTED TO DO WHILE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING WORKED OUT, DURING WHICH TIME HE ASSUMES PALESTINIAN FORCES WILL RETURN. HE ASKED ESSENTIALLY THIS SAME QUESTION IN A VARIETY OF WAYS DURING THE CONVERSATION.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 JERUSA 00790 01 OF 02 171702Z

4. DURING MY PRESENTATION I LEFT BEGIN WITH NO DOUBT THAT THE US IS ASKING ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW IMMEDIATELY FROM LEBANON. I STRESSED THAT WHILE WE HAD NO ASSURANCE THAT WE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL, WE HAVE COMMITTED OURSELVES TO WORK VIGOROUSLY FOR ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WILL ASSURE THE CONTINUED ABSENCE OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON ISRAEL LAUNCHED FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON. A PRINCIPAL ELEMENT OF THESE EFFORTS WILL BE THE FORMATION AND INSERTION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON OF A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE. I SPECIFICALLY DREW BEGIN'S ATTENTION TO OUR RESPONSE TO HIS SECOND QUESTION TO MAKE THE POINT THAT WE SEE THE REASONABLE CHANCE OF A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME AVAILABLE BETWEEN IDF WITHDRAWAL AND THE INSERTION OF AN ALTERNATIVE FORCE THAN ISRAEL APPARENTLY DOES. BUT I SAID I WANTED HIM TO UNDERSTAND THAT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS WE WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO GUARANTEE ANYTHING, EITHER IN THE WAY OF A PEACEKEEPING FORCE OR OF ASSURANCES. THE QUESTION, THEN, BECAME WHETHER IN THE WORST-CASE EVENTUALITY ISRAEL WOULD RISK JEOPARDIZING THE PEACE PROCESS TO KEEP IDF FORCES IN LEBANON.

5. I ALSO ASKED HIM POINTEDLY WHETHER, IF NOTHING CAN BE ARRANGED, ISRAEL REALLY INTENDS TO STAY IN LEBANON AND JEOPARDIZE ANY PROSPECT OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT. I ASSURED HIM

THAT I UNDERSTOOD THIS WAS A DIFFICULT CHOICE FOR HIM AND HIS GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT IN MY JUDGMENT THE OVERWHELMING NEED WAS TO KEEP THE PEACE PROCESS GOING. BEGIN BALKED AT THE SUGGESTION THAT ISRAEL IS JEOPARDIZING A PEACE SETTLEMENT, POINT-OUT AGAIN THAT ISRAEL IS BEING ASKED TO ASSUME THE RISK THAT TERRORISM WOULD RETURN TO ISRAEL VIA SOUTHERN LEBANON. HE SAID HE VOUNDED OUR RELIANCE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON AND ON THE INTRODUCTION OF LEBANESE FORCES VERY DISQUIETING. HE ASSERTED THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS DOES NOT HAVE ANY EFFECTIVE FORCES AT HIS DISPOSAL. I RESPONDED THAT NO ONE HAS ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE CURRENT CAPABILITY OF THE LEBANESE ARMY, BUT THAT WE HAVE THE INTENTION OF ASSISTING IN EVERY WAY WE CAN THE INTRODUCTION OF LEBANESE AUTHORITY INTO THE SOUTH AS QUICKLY AS IS POSSIBLE. THE FACT THAT THIS MAY TAKE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 JERUSA 00790 01 OF 02 171702Z

A WHILE IS PRECISELY WHY WE ARE ADVOCATING THE TEMPORARY INSERTION OF AN EFFECTIVE UN FORCE.

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 JERUSA 00790 02 OF 02 171727Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----029846 171734Z /47

O 171611Z MAR 78
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0546
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

SECRET SECTION 2 OF 2 JERUSALEM 0790

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

6. BEGIN WAS INSISTENT TO KNOW WHETHER, IF NO SATISFACTORY ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE, ISRAEL

STILL MUST WITHDRAW. I REPLIED THAT I WANTED TO BE VERY CANDID AS BEFITS THE ISRAELI-U.S. RELATIONSHIP AND THAT I DID NOT WANT TO MISLEAD HIM IN ANY WAY. I SAID THAT THE U.S. WILL DO ITS UTMOST TO ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT WHILE DEALING WITH THE IDIOSYNCRACIES OF THE UN. FROM OUR CONSULTATIONS THUS FAR WITH VARIOUS SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS, THERE IS REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC THAT MANY MEMBERS REALIZE THAT THE STATUS QUO ANTE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO RETURN. BUT IF OUR EFFORTS AND THOSE OF OTHERS ARE UNDERMINED AND IT TURNS OUT THAT NOTHING CAN BE ARRANGED, WE WILL STILL BE CONFRONTED WITH THE NECESSITY FOR PROMPT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

7. I TOLD BEGIN THAT WE HAVE BEEN WATCHING SADAT'S REACTION VERY CLOSELY AND THAT SO FAR IT HAS BEEN RELATIVE RESTRAINED. IT WAS MY JUDGMENT, HOWEVER, THAT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 JERUSA 00790 02 OF 02 171727Z

ONCE THE SECURITY COUNCIL CONVENES THIS COULD QUICKLY CHANGE. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE PUSHING VERY HARD WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD TO OBTAIN SYRIAN ASSISTANCE IN CONTROLLING ACCESS OF PALESTINIANS TO SOUTHERN LEBANON. I REITERATED OUR VIEW, HOWEVER, THAT WITHOUT PROMPT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WE WOULD NOT HAVE ANY CHANCE OF OBTAINING THE KIND OF ASSURANCES FROM THE VARIOUS PARTIES INVOLVED THAT WE BOTH AGREE ISRAEL NEEDS..

8. RETURNING TO THE PEACE PROCESS I STRESSED ONCE MORE OUR OVERRIDING CONCERN THAT A CONTINUED IDF PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WOULD UNDERMINE THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT. IN THIS REGARD AND CITING MY TELCON WITH AHERTON LAST EVENING, I REASSURED BEGIN THAT BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY ARE GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL'S NORTHERN BORDERS. BUT I SAID THEY ARE ALSO DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT NOTHING BE ALLOWED TO JEOPARDIZE THE PEACE PROCESS IN WHICH WE ALL HAVE SUCH A HIGH STAKE.

9. AS WE CLOSED, I REMINDED BEGIN OF THE SECRETARY'S OBLIGATION UNDER LAW TO REPORT TO THE CONGRESS ON THE USE OF U.S.-SUPPLIED ARMS BEYOND THE BORDERS OF THE RECIPIENT COUNTRY. I SAID THAT AMBASSADOR LEWIS HAD TOLD ME THE PREVIOUS EVENING THAT THE SECRETARY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DELAY UNDULY HIS REPORT ON THIS ASPECT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND THAT THIS CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION IS LIKELY TO BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS TIME GOES ON. BEGIN RESPONDED BY ASKING IF ANYONE DOUBTED THAT ISRAEL HAD ACTED IN SELF-DEFENSE IN ENTERING LEBANON. I REPLIED THAT THIS WAS

INDEED EVIDENT, BUT THAT IT WAS ISRAEL'S REMAINING THERE
THAT WAS NOW THE ISSUE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 JERUSA 00790 02 OF 02 171727Z

10. COMMENT: BEGIN WAS EXTREMELY SERIOUS AND ATTENTIVE
THROUGHOUT THE MEETING. I BELIEVE HE SEES FAR MORE CLEARLY
TODAY THE DILEMMA IN WHICH HE HAS PLACED ISRAEL. HE GAVE THE
IMPRESSION (BUT NEVER EXPLICITLY SAID SO) THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED
THE PRINCIPLE OF A UNK PEACEKEEPING FORCE. BUT HE REMAINS
DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IN SOUTH LEBANON
IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN AN IDF WITHDRAWAL AND THE ESTABLISH-
MENT IN PLACE OF A UN FORCE. I AM ALSO PERSUADED THAT
HE IS WEIGHING FAR MORE SERIOUSLY TODAY THAN HE DID YESTER-
DAY THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PEACE PROCESS SHOULD HE
UNDULY DELAY WITHDRAWAL. THAT SAID, WE ARE STILL A LONG
WAY FROM HOME PLATE.

NEWLIN

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PEACE, TROOP DEPLOYMENT, PALESTINIANS, MEETINGS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JERUSA00790
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS, FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TEL AVIV CHARGE
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850056-2679, N780003-0538
Format: TEL
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780356/aaaabuul.tel
Line Count: 246
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b79717c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: 78 STATE 68721, 78 STATE 67498
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3294224
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH BEGIN ON SOUTHERN LEBANON MARCH 17
TAGS: PGOV, MOPS, XF, US, LE, IS, (BEGIN, MENACHEM)
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b79717c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014